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THE ADVENTURE WITH TIGHT PURSE-STRINGS

By Temple Bailey.

The following article, written by a Missouri author, Miss Temple Bailey, of 341 South Main street, Webster Groves, was one of seven awarded a prize in a National short story contest in which authors from nearly every state in the Union participated.

Some time, some where, I read—on perhaps I wrote it myself in the days when fairy-tales were fashionable, a story of the Tight Purse-Strings.

It told of a miser who always pulled the purse-strings tight when he was asked to give. If a beggar held out his hands for alms the old miser shook his head and tightened his purse-strings; if a starving child asked for a penny to buy a bit of bread, the old miser shook his head and tightened his purse-strings; if a sick woman made a plea, the old miser shook his head and tightened his purse-strings! At last he tightened them once too often, so that the good fairy who sits up aloft and sees justice done, placed a spell upon him, and behold, after that, he could never open his purse, not even for himself, and his gold was no good to him for he couldn't get at it, and his head shook and shook, and wouldn't stop shaking, and so he went to the end of his days with a purse full of gold that he couldn't spend, and a head shaking that he couldn't stop!

I have been reminded of my fairy-tale more than once in these days when drives are on to finance the various war activities. We are now in the midst of an important campaign, which has been undertaken in the interest of the organizations which have as their slogan, "We help the Home to follow the Flag"; the Y. M. C. A., Salvation Army, the American Library Association, the Knights of Columbus, which have to do with the comfort and happiness of our fighting men in camp or at the front. And I am constrained to discover, if I can, some of the reasons which make our modern misers shake their heads, and tighten their purse-strings when they are asked to contribute.

"Don't ask me," they quaver, "I have bought Liberty Bonds!" As if that were the end of it! And it isn't the end at all!

I am inclined to think that the trouble lies in their lack of imagination. They can't put themselves in the other fellow's place.

They can't visualize the conditions which make imperatively necessary the friendly butts of the Y. M. C. A. and those other friendly huts.

I wonder who was first inspired to call them "huts"? There has always been in my mind an association of ideas between a hut and welcoming cheer—a light in a window for a tired man, a steaming pot on the stove for hungry mouths, a warm hearth. Even in the story of the Three Bears, I judged their hut in the woods a very pleasant place, with the three pots of savory soup, the three deep chairs, the three soft beds, and I always felt that Goldilocks got into trouble only because she took things without asking—the bears would, I was sure, if she proached in the right way, have been as hospitable as all other lucky people who live in huts!

Then, in history—there was King Alfred, you remember, who baked cakes in a hut and burned them, and has come to us as a fascinating example of kindly carelessness, and to balance that we are told of a king and queen who ate American buckwheat cakes the other day with our own boys in our own hut in London!

And now the hut is the soldier's home! It is there that he writes his letters, plays games, is entertained, buys his chocolate and cigarettes, attends church services.

"For Heaven's sake, why pamper them?" asks a smug old gentleman, who rages if his reading lamp isn't right, who grumbles and growls if his egg isn't soft, who plays golf and molars and dines and sups as complacently as if the whole world were not torn by war—"Why pamper them? What do they need of chocolate or cigarettes? I never smoked a cigarette in my life, and I hate chocolate. And

singing psalms won't help them any. Why don't they fight it out like men, and let the money be used for arms and equipment? I haven't any sympathy with all this sentimental slush about the Home following them. Let them harden up a bit."

When I hear a man talk like that I know he has never smelled powder or faced a gun. It is the little things that count in a soldier's life. I came very young to the knowledge of that, for my father fought through the four years of the Civil War, and the stories of my childhood were, therefore, those of war; not of its horror—my father kept the tales of tragedy for an older audience; he gave to me the homely details—what the soldiers ate, what they wore, where they slept, the songs they sang, their jokes—the funny old jokes that lose their point now as we hate.

Thus I learned that in a soldier's lexicon there are two very important words—"food" and "fun." I found it very hard at first to picture my disgraced father in his frock coat and top hat as making flapjacks or digging a pit in which beans were to be baked, and which I was assured tasted better than any beans in the whole wide world when eaten with hardtack and molasses-sweetened coffee. It was only by getting out old pictures that I saw him at last this and boyish in a shabby uniform, and looking more like somebody's younger brother than anybody's father!

I was never allowed to lose sight of the fact that war was a high and solemn adventure, and I use "adventure" here in a rather limited sense, as the search for the Grail was an adventure, or the Crusades. Fighting must, I knew, have the justification of unselfish purpose. My father held that it was not only right, it was the requisite and strong thing to take up arms for the relief of the oppressed. A battle for one's own freedom, or the freedom of another was a righteous cause. I remember that he came home one night with blood on his cuffs. He had happened upon a big brute beating a cripple. It was the brute's blood that that was on my father's cuffs. And the cripple, because of my father, had some unharmed. It was a lesson I

when Belgium was invaded by the Hun!

Because of my father, and the things he told me of that other war, I have come, perhaps, more easily to an understanding of the present conflict, and the part our men play, than those to whom war is a thing new and fresh, and who see in it only battlefields and the dead and dying.

A friend of mine said to me the other day—a devoted and gentle mother—"I think of my son always as facing guns, bayoneting Germans, lying in the mud and filth. I cannot sleep. I am haunted by the thought of the dreadfulness of it all, and I can do nothing for him."

But there was a great deal that she could do, and I told her so.

"But what?"

There was a pile of letters on her desk—letters in pale buff envelopes, stamped with a red triangle and a quartet of magical letters.

"There's your answer," I said.

"What do you mean?"

"Those four letters—Y. M. C. A.—spell comfort for your boy, amusement, sympathy. Not all of war is fighting. He isn't always going over the top, or killing Huns. A lot of times he is just tired or homesick or lonely. It is then that he thinks of you. It is then that he longs for home. And if you can't be with him, you can help him to follow home."

It was hard to make her understand, as I have found it hard to make others understand. In her capacity of mother, she wanted to minister to her child. If she had had him with her she would have comforted him, cheered him, but at long distance what could she do?

"Let others do it," I told her bluntly, "and pay them well for it. It is the cup of cold water they are offering, can't you see? You aren't there to do it. You can't be there. You wouldn't be a bit of use if you were there. But a Salvation Army lassie can hand him a doughnut to hearten him up at the psychological moment—the hole can furnish him with amusement, spiritual uplift, companionship, paper to write his letters, his chocolate, cigarettes and coffee. And they are only asking you to give your money. Many women are giving more; there are many titled women in London who have sent their sons to fight, have turned their homes into hospitals, have poured out their money in generous response to every call, and are now working as charwomen in 'Y' canteens."

There's the story—have you heard it—of the woman who, on her knees with brush and hot water and soap, was scrubbing the floor of the Eagle Hut. The water in the pail was black. The woman wanted the pail emptied and clean water brought. A man in uniform came by, and she asked him to do it. There was a pause, then his only, "Damn it, madame, I'm an of-



It costs us \$4 billion to keep him equipped and only \$170 million to keep him smiling. Let's do it.

feer." There was a tense moment, then the flashing response, "Damn it, officer, I'm a duchess."

"I don't see how you can joke about it," said the lady to whom war was all fighting.

"Oh, my dear, my dear," I told her, "if we can't joke about it a little we shall all be having sleepless nights, and that would never do."

I found as we talked that she was rather pathetically limited in her conception of the needs of her son and of other sons. I went away with a check in four figures for the cause—yet I am not sure that even now she quite comprehends what she has done to contribute to the happiness of the boys who have offered their young lives in our defense.

Let me say this to you who have been tempted to shake your heads and pull your purse-strings tight—the men over there haven't any homes—a trench isn't a home, or a tent, or even a French farmhouse where one is billeted and sleeps on straw. And for a youngster who has always had a soft bed, two pillows, a hair mattress, a hot bath, grapefruit for breakfast, a whole pleasant American house to be happy in, you can imagine what it means to be homeless, with not a desk nor a chair which belongs to him, nor a nook or corner for his own things, nothing but a kit bag and a casual sleeping place!

Then along comes a Salvation Army angel with a piece of pie, and there's a bit of home; or a pleasant, middle-aged woman smiles over the counter of a canteen as she pours his coffee, and there's home, and mother, or Mary Pickford smiles at him from a moving picture screen, and there's blessed, darling America in every line of her; or Southern redies, or Kiele Jants dances, and he's back home beside you, eager and excited, your little lad, with his hand in yours—"Isn't it corking, mother?"

Oh, loosen your purse-strings, pour out the gold! Put yourself in the other man's place. Pray for a vision. Let some dream come to you of what it would mean if you were transported suddenly from the softness and ease of your life to a world of fire and flame and horror.

Wouldn't you want the light of a little hut to shine out for you? Wouldn't you want the smiling woman's face, the touch of a friendly hand, wouldn't you think of that hut as the only oasis in a Desert of Dreadful Things?

Put yourself in his place, and if you can't fight with him, at least spend your money for him. Spend as much as you can—and then spend more. He's worth it, and he's worth it not only because he's your lad and my lad, but because he's fighting for the honor of your country, and for the world's need of freedom from the Hun!

PEACE NOW IN SIGHT, BUT END IS NOT YET

But Missouri's Duty to Our Boys Not Done Till the Last One Is Safe at Home.

The election news succeeded in crowding the war news off the first page of the newspapers Wednesday, and affairs political may now be expected to resume the normal in Missouri.

War news will again take precedence over other news, until that class of news can be termed peace news, and this can only be a matter of days. Peace is bound to come, and come shortly.

Germany, the only remaining part of the Central Powers, still holds out, but she is tottering to an early fall. The country is exhausted, and the man-power is taxed to its uttermost. The German people want peace, and the military must surrender or be annihilated.

But when peace is declared and victory is won America's task is not done. There must follow reconstruction day "over there." This great country that went into the war without one selfish motive, to fight the battles of the weaker nations and to insure equal justice to all nations, and to make the world safe for democracy, must see that its aims are accomplished.

This is going to delay the return of a part of that noble army of more than 2,000,000 men, more than 100,000 of whom came from Missouri. America's duty to her own men is not done until the last mother's son of the army is safely back at home.

The national Government will see that our boys have the regulation clothing, and that they have food in sufficient quantities. No soldier is ever better cared for than are the Americans. But there are many things that the Government cannot do.

The seven great auxiliaries to our fighting forces that minister to the men are equipped for the work where the Government stops. The work done by the Y. M. C. A., the Salvation Army, the Y. W. C. A., the Knights of Columbus, the Jewish Welfare Board, the American Library Association, and the War Camp Community Service render that personal service, serving both the bodily and spiritual phase of the soldier's life, that a government cannot do.

Workers from these organizations provide blankets for the boys that are reminiscent of home. They carry hot coffee to the trenches and the battle front. They establish huts that take

the place of the vicious canteens of other days, and see that the soldier in his leisure has good books to read, and is given entertainment of all approved sorts to hearten him.

These organizations, backed up by President Wilson, ask Missouri to aid in the United War Work Campaign that will raise \$7,500,000 in this state Nov. 11-18, not for the organizations but for our boys over there. The nation at large will raise \$250,000,000. Missouri will not fail to give her share.

THANKSGIVING IN 1918

More Cause for Real Thanks This Year Than Any Since Custom Is Established.

Not since the early days when our Pilgrim fathers created the Thanksgiving idea will the last Thursday in November mean so much to the American people as will the Thanksgiving Day of 1918.

With Austria vanquished, the unspeakable Turk unconditionally surrendered, and Bulgaria disarmed, and with Germany whipped to a frazzle and ready to capitulate, surely the whole civilized world will join in with America on this glad occasion.

But when we pause to think that the boys in khaki, more than 2,000,000 of them, are on foreign soil fighting our battles and mine, unselfishly, fighting that democracy may live all over the earth, is there not something we owe the brave Americans?

Secretary Baker says the seven great organizations comprising the United War Work Campaign looking after our soldiers over there deserve every aid. President Wilson appeals to a generous people for generous donations Nov. 11-18.

Don't you think your turkey will taste better Thanksgiving Day if you send cheer to our boys over there? Let's get behind this great movement and let our boys know that we are proud of them and appreciate their sacrifices.

WHY THEY "BATTED LEFT"

Johnny Evers, baseball star now in France, tells of an amusing experience he had with a group of French soldiers belonging to Gen. Vidal's troops.

All the men, eager to learn, baffled with their left hands. After a while Evers, who tells the story in United War Work Campaign interest, discovered that they did so because he, being himself a left-handed batter, had no shown them. They weren't left-handed, the Frenchies—they were simply trying to learn the new game right.

Evers, the hero of several world's championships, is attached to one of

the seven organizations devoting their time to the welfare of the American sailors, rookies and marines.

A WALLED CITY OF WOMEN

A little sunny village has grown up inside a high wall in France within the last year. Its square that houses stand in straight even rows and along one side of the city wall is a long dormitory for single women. There are many more of them than of the families to the drab little houses. The village is full of women—old, young, middle-aged—whose faces, hands and hair slowly are turning yellow from the powder which it is said will eventually affect their lungs. But most of them are refugees and the fact that they are giving up their good looks, their health, and perhaps their lives in the munition factory, is of little moment to them. They have come into the walled town from ruined villages and devastated farms with their frightened little children, their despairing old people, carrying all their earthly possessions in tiny bundles. In their individual lives there is no future; in all their world there is no interest but the conquest of the Hun.

No one comes into this little war community that centers around the big new munitions plant but those who work. Because of the danger and the blighting yellow powder, the work is highly paid and all the workers are volunteers.

The women wear overalls or apron dresses, some of black taten, some nondescript. The dull garb harmonizes with the yellowing faces and despairing eyes.

Into this modern walled city of despair the Blue Triangle has flashed the first message of hope. The Y. W. C. A. foyer is the only recreational center within reach. The cars which find cafes at the end of the line a mile away, stop running at seven o'clock to save fuel. The city is three miles from the factory.

"My problem," writes the Y. W. C. A. secretary in charge, "is to keep the women occupied in the evenings, to give them good healthy amusement so that they will forget their sorrows and not be so sad and lonely and discontented that they will quit."

She goes on to tell of some of the women and girls who come to the foyer.

"There is a pretty little round, rosy-cheeked girl here who is just beginning to show the effects of the powder. The roots of her hair and her forehead are a pale yellow. The palms of her hands are a deep burnt orange and her hands and arms a bright yellow."

"There is an ex-professional dancer, an interesting girl who enjoys the foyer and helps entertain the other girls. There is a professional pianist who does her bit at the noon and evening hours. There is one tough-and-ready girl who speaks English, whose father was a tankpiper in northern France. There is a pretty little girl who is engaged to a French soldier who still is rejoicing over the five minutes she had with him recently during an air raid. His mother is the caretaker here and he is one of six sons in the war. Two of them are German military prisoners, two are civil prisoners in Germany and two are soldiers in the trenches. Her home in the north of France was destroyed and she escaped with a small bundle of such things as she could carry in her hands."

"There is a sweet-faced girl who was a lacemaker in Valenciennes, who came direct to us from the German-ruled section after a hard experience in getting away."

These are the women the Blue Triangle is helping to forget—perhaps only for an hour at a time—the horrors that have blackened their hearts and darkened the world.

"My foyer," the secretary writes, "consists of a hall and two large rooms with cement floors. One has a writing table and paper, pens and ink, sewing machines, a cupboard with tin cans in it, a large table with papers and magazines, easy chairs and my desk. The other room has a piano, more tables, chairs, ironing boards and a Victrola. There are unframed French pictures and American and French war posters around the room. The walls are painted gray and white."

Saturday evenings they sing and dance. "First they have a chorus," writes the secretary, "such as 'Le Reve Passe' or the 'Hymne des Aviateurs' or something equally uplifting, and at the final notes of triumph a voice at my ears begs, 'Un polka, mess.' The polka finished, there is a call for the 'Hymne Americain' and the singing of the 'Star-Spangled Banner' (Le Drapeau Kiole) in two languages."

These foyers have been established in several munition centers in France. Each one has a cafeteria, a recreation hall and rooms fitted up as reading rooms, writing and sewing rooms. At night these rooms are filled with French girls learning English, book-keeping or stenography, that they may work in the offices of the American Expeditionary Forces. In connection with each is a large recreation field or court.